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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/936,900	09/19/2001	Makoto Inoue	01309.00015	2911
7590	08/28/2006		EXAMINER	
Frank D Wolfe Banner & Witcoff Eleventh Floor 1001 G Street NW Washington, DC 20001-4597				CUFF, MICHAEL A
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		3627		
DATE MAILED: 08/28/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/936,900	INOUE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Michael Cuff	3627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 June 2006.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1,3-27,29,30,32 and 33 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1, 3-27, 29, 30, 32, and 33 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.

5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3-27, 29, 30, 32, and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Simonetti.

Simonetti shows that two databases (customer database and distribution database) could be combined into a single table by adding two columns for storing the information specifying the distribution center and regional center to database table 10. It should be noted that database 20 which includes one record for each order placed in the present example would be expected to have many more records than database 10 which, contains one record per city. Combining the two databases would provide a single database (automated means) that could be more efficiently searched; however, the duplication of the information from the smaller database 20 in the large customer database 10 would significantly increase the memory or disk space needed to store the database. It should be noted that all customers have an ID (this includes distributors and suppliers). A known route associated with your customer ID is considered to be a predetermined setting. The ordering means are independent from the route determining means. The routes are specified, identified, and separated by nodes. Part of any one given route has a supply part and a final delivery part, which are separated by nodes.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 6/23/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant discusses, on pages 11-12, differences between applicant's invention and the cited prior art, but there are no assertions of what claimed elements are missing.

On page 13, applicant asserts that, "Simonetti does not teach or suggest separating merchandise distribution routes from one another based on plural sorts of merchandise and predetermined settings."

The actual claim language is :

"separating one route from another upon receipt of order signals from the customer specified by the customer specifying means to deliver the plural sorts of merchandise to the customer, ..." and

"separating the merchandise distribution routes from each other on the basis of product number and category of each of the merchandise items according to predetermined settings; ..."

The prior art reads on the recited claim language because the merchandise distribution routes are separated from each other based on the supplier of an ordered

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item, which is based upon the product number and category of the ordered item. There are many "known routes", which connect distribution points and other distribution points and customer addresses. These "known routes" are considered to be "predetermined settings". Each item ordered is separately routed and they combined at a node as they approach a common "known route".

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Cuff whose telephone number is (571) 272-6778. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Alexander Kalinowski can be reached on (571) 272-6771. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Michael Cuff 8/18/06
Michael Cuff
August 18, 2006